

Although *H. bimaculata* is one of our commoner large Tabanids, breeding records appear to be few, and this probably applies throughout the family. There is, besides, a further point of interest here: the species is essentially a woodland one, while the situation in which the pupa was found was quite open and unshaded for a long distance around; the nearest woodland (of a rather scrubby and fragmentary nature) lay some way to the west. Sexual differences apart, this male agrees well with a female *f. collini* that I took in Ham Street Wood, Kent (11.vi.64), but is darker overall. The form is stated by Oldroyd (p.61) to be rare in Britain; he records it from only four counties, none of them south-western. The pupa case has been placed in the BM collection. — A. A. ALLEN.

EARLY APPEARANCES OF SPRING MOTHS.—A number of contributors have recently written on this subject to which the following might be added. On the evening of 28th December, 1980 I was searching for females of *Erannis defoliaria* Clerck in Fence Wood, Berkshire. In this I was unsuccessful, although males were plentiful along the rides, but a female which was noted was of *Agriopsis marginaria* (F.). A male of this species was noted later in the evening. Late December seems very early for Dotted Borders. As for female *E. defoliaria*, I had to wait until 11th January when two were noted on an ash trunk at the B.B.O.N.T. Moor Copse Reserve near Tidmarsh, Berkshire. Another early appearance was that of *Cucullia verbasci* (L.) which appeared in the Caversham trap on the night of 9th/10th April.—B. R. BAKER, Reading Museum and Art Gallery, Reading, Berks.

ANOTHER PROBABLE INSTANCE OF ATTEMPTED DISPERSAL — Further to the theme of insect dispersal (A. J. Showler, vol. 92 199-200 and A. A. Allen, vol. 93, 157-158) I can cite a very interesting case of the normally flightless meadow grasshopper, *Chorthippus parallelus* (Zetterstedt) producing substantial numbers of the normally rare macropterous form *explicatus*, de Selys, as a probable consequence of a huge population build-up after the two hot summers of 1975 and 1976. The location is the well-known picnic area of Fairmile Bottom in West Sussex by the A29, grid reference 41 (SU) 9809.

Although facing north-west the site has an overall southerly slope and is warm and sheltered. A thin layer of clay overlies chalk and an extensive area of species — rich grassland is maintained by West Sussex County Council, by gang-mowing in Autumn. This has successfully prevented the invasion of scrub for the past six years.

Fairmile Bottom is noteworthy for its grasshopper fauna which includes *Chorthippus brunneus* (Thunberg), *C. parallelus* (Zetterstedt), *Gomphocerippus rufus* (L.), *Omocestus rufipes* (Zett.) *O. viridulus* (L.) and *Stenobothrus lineatus* (Panzer). By the end of August 1976 all species were present in exceptionally high numbers. In aggregate the grasshopper population at Fairmile Bottom must have totalled many thousands — so many indeed that the turf was visibly grazed by the buzzing swarms. At a rough estimate *C. parallelus* seemed to comprise about half the total population.